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24a can indicate that it contains black ink, and the tab pattern displayed on the right ink reservoir 24b can indicate that the right ink reservoir is a multi-chamber reservoir containing blue, magenta, and yellow colored ink.

In the Claims

Claims 1, 2, 7-12, 14 and 16 have been rewritten herein. New claims 21-30 have been added. A complete set of claims is provided below. A redlined version of the amended claims is attached as Attachment B to this amendment.

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1. (Amended) A mechanism for establishing compatibility of a printer component with a printer comprising:

a printer component mounting portion operably secured to the printer;

a discrete key element attachably secured to the component mounting portion, adjacent to said printer component;

at least one tab extending from the printer component, said at least one tab positioned and oriented in a defined and unique tab pattern thereby indicating a required characteristic of the printer component; and

said discrete key element having at least one mating slot positioned and aligned to receive said at least one tab, thereby allowing the printer component to be operably secured to the mounting portion and preventing similarly shaped printer components that have a different tab pattern from being operably secured to the printer component mounting portion.

2. (Amended) A mechanism for establishing compatibility of a printer component with a printer comprising:

a printer component mounting portion operably secured to the printer;

a separate key element detachably secured to said component mounting portion, adjacent to said printer component;

at least one tab extending from the printer component, said at least one tab positioned and oriented in a defined and unique tab pattern thereby indicating a required characteristic of the printer component; and

said separate key element having at least one mating slot positioned and aligned to receive said at least one tab, thereby allowing the printer component to be operably secured to the mounting portion and preventing similarly shaped printer

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components that have a different tab pattern from being operably secured to the printer component mounting portion.

3. The mechanism for establishing printer component compatibility with a printer of claim 1, wherein said printer component is an ink reservoir.

4. The mechanism for establishing printer component compatibility with a printer of claim 1, wherein said printer component is an ink/printhead cartridge.

5. The mechanism for establishing printer component compatibility with a printer of claim 1, wherein said printer component is a printhead.

6. The mechanism for establishing printer component compatibility with a printer of claim 1, wherein said printer is an inkjet printer.

7. (Amended) The mechanism for establishing printer component compatibility with a printer of claim 1, wherein said discrete key element includes a unique slot for operably engaging a protrusion extending from said printer component mounting portion, thereby allowing said discrete key to be secured to said printer component mounting portion, and preventing key elements that are missing said unique slot from being secured to said printer component mounting portion.

8. (Amended) A mechanism for establishing compatibility of a printer component with a printer comprising:

a printer component mounting portion operably secured to the printer;

a separate key element secured to the component mounting portion, adjacent to said printer component, said separable key element further including a display surface for visually indicating a required characteristic of the printer component;

at least one tab extending from the printer component, said at least one tab positioned and oriented in a defined and unique tab pattern thereby indicating said required characteristic of the printer component; and

said discrete key element having at least one mating slot positioned and aligned to receive said at least one tab, thereby allowing the printer component to be operably secured to the mounting portion and preventing similarly shaped printer components that have a different tab pattern from being operably secured to the printer component mounting portion.

9. (Amended) The mechanism for establishing printer component compatibility with a printer of claim 8, wherein said display surface has a unique shape, and further including a label displaying surface indicia thereon to indicate said required characteristic of the printer component and having said unique shape for being operably secured to said display surface.

10. (Amended) The mechanism for establishing printer component compatibility with a printer of claim 1, further including:

a second printer component;

a second printer component mounting portion operably secured to the printer;

a second discrete key element secured to the second component mounting portion, adjacent to said second printer component;

a second at least one tab extending from one of the second printer component and said second discrete key element, said second at least one tab positioned and oriented in a defined and unique second tab pattern, different from the tab pattern of said at least one tab, thereby indicating a required characteristic of the second printer component; and

the other of the second printer component and said second discrete key element having at least one second mating slot positioned and aligned to receive said second at least one tab, thereby allowing the second printer component to be operably secured to the mounting portion and preventing similarly shaped printer components that have a different tab pattern from said second tab pattern from being operably secured to the second printer component mounting portion.

11. (Amended) An inkjet printer comprising:

a chassis;

a motor;

a carriage operably secured to the chassis and driven by the motor for reciprocal movement relative to the chassis;

an ink reservoir secured to the printer at a mounting portion, said ink reservoir having a unique pattern of tabs extending therefrom thereby indicating a characteristic of the ink received within the reservoir;

a printhead operably secured to the carriage, in fluid communication with said ink reservoir, and in electrical communication with a controller;

a discrete key element, operably secured to and separable from said mounting portion, said key element having a pattern of slots sized to receive the pattern of tabs extending from the ink reservoir, thereby allowing said ink reservoir to be operably secured to the mounting portion and preventing ink reservoirs having a different pattern of tabs from being operably secured to the first mounting portion.

12. (Amended) An inkjet printer comprising:

a chassis;

a motor;

a carriage operably secured to the chassis and driven by the motor for reciprocal movement relative to the chassis;

an ink reservoir secured to the printer at a mounting portion, said ink reservoir having a unique pattern of tabs extending therefrom thereby indicating a characteristic of the ink received within the reservoir;

a printhead operably secured to the carriage, in fluid communication with said ink reservoir, and in electrical communication with a controller;

a discrete key element detachably secured to said mounting portion, said key element having a pattern of slots sized to receive the pattern of tabs extending from the ink reservoir, thereby allowing said ink reservoir to be operably secured to the mounting portion and preventing ink reservoirs having a different pattern of tabs from being operably secured to the first mounting portion.

13. The inkjet printer of claim 12, wherein said separable key element includes a unique slot for operably engaging a protrusion extending from said mounting portion, thereby allowing said separable key to be secured to said mounting portion, and preventing key elements that are missing said unique slot from being secured to said mounting portion.

14. (Amended) The inkjet printer of claim 11, wherein said separable key element further includes a display surface displaying surface indicia thereon for visually indicating said characteristic of the ink received within the reservoir.

15. The inkjet printer of claim 14, wherein said first mounting portion is mounted to said carriage defining an on-axis ink reservoir.

16. (Amended) A method for establishing a detachable printer component compatibility with a printer component mount in a printer comprising the steps of:

providing a unique key on the detachable printer component that indicates a required characteristic of the printer component;

installing a discrete key element on the printer component mount for operably receiving the key from the printer component when the printer component is properly installed in the printer mount;

mounting the printer component onto the printer component mount such that the key is operably received through the key element, thereby indicating proper printer component compatibility with the printer component mount.

17. The method for establishing a detachable printer component compatibility with a printer component mount in a printer of claim 16, further including the step of providing a slot in a mounting portion of the key element for operably engaging a protrusion extending from the printer component mount, thereby allowing the key element to be secured to the mounting portion, and preventing other key elements that are missing the slot from being secured to the mounting portion.

18. The method for establishing a detachable printer component compatibility with a printer component mount in a printer of claim 16, further including the step of providing a display surface on the key element for visually indicating said characteristic of the ink received within the reservoir.

19. The method for establishing a detachable printer component compatibility with a printer component mount in a printer of claim 16, wherein said mounting step further includes:

first inserting a toe end of the printer component into a forward mount; and,

lowering the opposite rearward end of the printer component into a rearward mount such that the key passes through the key element when the rearward end of the printer component is lowered toward the component mount.

20. The method for establishing a detachable printer component compatibility with a printer component mount in a printer of claim 19, wherein the printer is an inkjet printer having a carriage, the printer component is a detachable ink reservoir, and the printer component mount is operably secured to the carriage.

21. (Newly added) A mechanism for establishing compatibility of a printer component having a defined key code thereon with a printer comprising:

a printer component mounting portion operably secured to the printer;

a discrete key element attachably secured to the printer component mounting portion, adjacent to said printer component, said key element operably engaging the key code of the printer component to allow the printer component with the defined key code to be operably secured to the printer component mounting portion.

22. (Newly added) The mechanism for establishing compatibility of a printer component having a defined key code thereon with a printer of claim 21, wherein said discrete key element prevents similarly shaped printer components that have a different key code thereon from being operably secured to the printer component mounting portion.

23. (Newly added) The mechanism for establishing compatibility of a printer component having a defined key code thereon with a printer of claim 21, wherein said discrete key element is detachably secured to said printer mounting portion.

24. (Newly added) The mechanism for establishing compatibility of a printer component having a defined key code thereon with a printer of claim 23, wherein said defined key code is related to a desirable characteristic of said printer component and said key element includes surface indicia thereon to visually indicate the desirable characteristic of said printer component.

25. (Newly added) The mechanism for establishing compatibility of a printer component having a defined key code thereon with a printer of claim 21, wherein said separable key element includes a mounting portion key element of operably engaging a mating key on said mounting portion.

26. (Newly Added) The mechanism for establishing compatibility of a printer component with a printer of claim 2, wherein said key element includes surface indicia thereon to visually indicate the required characteristic of said printer component.

27. (Newly Added) The mechanism for establishing compatibility of a printer component with a printer of claim 2, wherein said printer component is an ink reservoir.